

### ***Congressman Farr's bill would reauthorize the Marine Debris Program through 2015***

**Washington, DC** – The House of Representatives today passed Congressman Sam Farr's (D-Carmel) bill to reauthorize the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act. The bipartisan bill would continue funding through 2015 for the existing Marine Debris Program in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which seeks to address the adverse impacts of trash in the ocean, including debris from last year's tsunami in Japan.

"We cannot protect the oceans one beach at a time," said Congressman Farr. "By reauthorizing the Marine Debris program, this bill ensures there will be national response to the problems created by trash in the oceans. Our personal and economic health is tied to the health of our oceans and we must protect this valuable natural resource."

Every year 7 million tons of trash ends up in the ocean, costing millions in clean up costs and lost revenue for fisheries and the tourism industry. An additional 5-20 million tons of debris from Japan's tsunami will arrive on our shores after crossing the Pacific, exemplified by the 60-foot dock that beached in Oregon carrying 90 non-native species. Without the proper preventive measures, the introduction of these invasive species could cripple coastal ecosystems and local economies.

Realizing the magnitude of that increased risk, Congressman Farr's bill called for \$10 million in funding for the program. The Republican controlled House reduced that amount to \$4.9 million before final passage. A companion bill in the Senate, offered by Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), would fund the program at the full \$10 million. That legislation is currently moving towards a vote in the Senate.

"Marine debris is more than just an eyesore; it is a serious problem for marine ecosystems, fisheries and shipping," said Congressman Farr. "The increased amount of debris arriving on our shores daily from last year's tsunami in Japan proves this is a global problem. To fully prepare for the threat of this new debris, we must fully fund the program at \$10 million."

###